PITTA

Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
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SPECIAL ISSUE
WEST BENGAL

Editor's note

Some of our members had been to Buxa, Rishyap, Gajoldoba and Mahananda WLS during January 12-19, 2024, for an eight-day birdwatching trip. In this Special Issue of the Pitta, we bring you a report on that trip, along with a number of colourful photographs. We hope you will find this Special Issue interesting.

BIRDING BONANZA IN BENGAL

Trip Report: Buxa, Rishyap, Gajoldoba & Rongtong, West Bengal, January 11-19, 2024

Report: Umesh Mani; Photos: Umesh Mani (unless otherwise specified)

A view of the mountains near Paporkheti

Three birder friends from the US – a young couple, Kaushik & Lavanya, and Karin, recently of Hyderabad – joined Sridhar & Amitabha from Hyderabad, and me myself from Chennai on a short trip to West Bengal in January 2024.

The plan went through several iterations before finally taking shape. Initially announced as a Deccan Birders trip to Sikkim, which had to be scrapped due to the floods there, it was reshaped as a Deccan Birders trip to Singalila National Park and surroundings, which again had to be called off at the last minute due to heavy snowfall prediction for the dates we were supposed to be there. Finally we arrived at a revised itinerary, which included 2-3 days each at Buxa Tiger Reserve, Lava-Rishyap, and Mahananda WLS.

And though we rued the missed opportunity to see the Red Panda in the wild, the new plan more than made up for it. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as we ended up with nice sightings and pretty good photographs of a large number of great species.

Day-0: January 11, 2024: Siliguri

With no convenient flight reaching Siliguri (Bagdogra) early in the morning, we had to get there a day early. Arriving around midday, we checked in, dropped our luggage and convened for a late lunch at the inhouse restaurant. Then, having been there a few times already, I decided to take a nap, while the rest of the group decided to explore the city, and headed to Nauka Ghat, where a *haat* (market) full of shops selling all kinds of tourist merchandise and memorabilia beckoned.

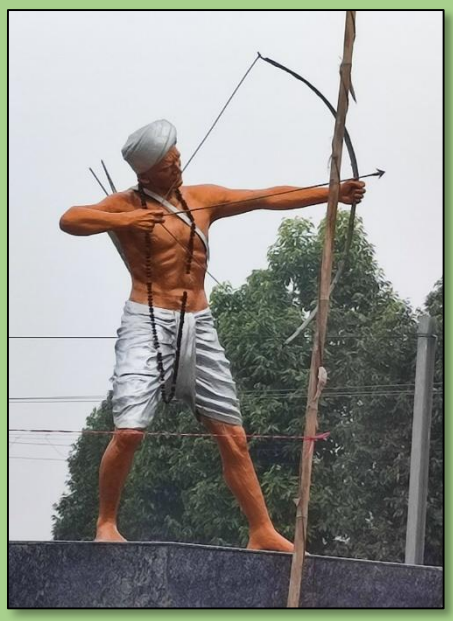
Nauka Ghat market (Photo: Kaushik Lakshminarayan)

Having successfully spent a few hours – and a considerable sum of money! – they returned to the hotel around 7:00PM, their hands full of mementos and knick-knacks.

Tomorrow was to be an early start so, a quick dinner later, we decided to retire early, excited at the great birding the trip promised to give us.

Day-1: January 12, 2024: Buxa Tiger Reserve (BTR)

In spite of our best intentions and efforts, we were not able to start off before 6:30AM, so we decided we would try not to stop for birds on the way – the light was poor anyway, and would only delay our arrival at Buxa. Accordingly we drove till around 8:30AM, and stopped at the aptly-named Himalay Hotel for breakfast. It seemed to be a popular truckers' stop, going by the number of trucks that were parked nearby, and such places usually have good food too. A leisurely breakfast later, we got underway for Buxa.



An impressive statue en route to Buxa Tiger Reserve

Red-plate vehicles from Bhutan have free access to Buxa region

We saw a lot of vehicles with red number-plates, and learnt that vehicles from Bhutan had free access to the region. The only exception to our self-imposed no-stopping rule came when we saw a small raptor perched on a wooden pole pretty close to the road – a Himalayan Buzzard! The guide was puzzled as to why it was down so low, near the plains.

Himalayan Buzzard

Reaching our homestay around 11:30AM, we quickly dropped our bags and headed out to get in some birding before lunch. We decided to explore the Jainti River bed, which was close by and offered the possibility of some plovers, lapwings, etc.

We were greeted by a Silk Cotton tree in bloom, which had several small birds hopping around – Hair-crested Drongo, Golden-fronted Leafbird etc. We spent a few minutes there, but the riverbed beckoned, so we moved on. Walking on a dry riverbed is not easy, mind you! – the sand, smooth rocks and slippery vegetation all seem to be plotting to bring you down to earth. But the possibility of seeing new birds is a powerful motivator!

River Lapwing

The first sighting, as expected, was the River Lapwing. It led us on a merry dance, moving away every time we approached, before we were able to capture a few decent photographs. A flock of Green Pigeons flew over, too fast to see properly or identify.

A view of the Jainti River bed expanse (Photo: Kaushik Lakshminarayan)

Then came the main target of the walk – the Long-billed Plover. We saw two individuals, and they were fairly cooperative, allowing us to approach to a reasonable distance.

Long-billed Plover

Many other common birds were seen – Little Ringed Plover, Bank Swallow (aka Sand Martin), White-browed Wagtail, Plumbeous and Hodgson's Redstarts, Green Sandpiper, Asian Palm Swift and Himalayan Swiftlet.

Himalayan Swiftlet

Another Silk Cotton tree in the middle of the river yielded the Great Myna and Chestnut-tailed Starling, some Common Hill Mynas, a pair of Chestnut-bellied Nuthatches, a Golden-fronted Leafbird and a Maroon Oriole female.

Great Myna

Golden-fronted Leafbird

Maroon Oriole female

Back at the river bank, the same tree that had given the Leafbird at the start now gave us a small flock of Red-breasted Parakeets, along with a couple of Alexandrine Parakeets and a Streaked Spiderhunter.

Red-breasted Parakeet

Alexandrine Parakeet

Streaked Spiderhunter

We took a quick lunch break, but it was already nearly 2:30PM, and it usually gets dark early in these regions, so we decided to go to a nearby 'natural hide' and spend a couple of hours there. En route, we saw a Collared Falconet on a dry tree – very exciting! But it was a little far, and also didn't give us much time, so we were not really satisfied. The guide, though, was very matter of fact – "Yeh to mil jayega"!

The distant Collared Falconet

The 'natural hide' (Photo: Lavanya Kothandaraman)

The hide was just a small stream – barely a trickle of water – surrounded by vegetation, and we needed to sit on stools inside the bushes and stick our cameras or binoculars through the leaves!

It turned out to be very fruitful, yielding a host of interesting species, some of them pretty difficult to get in regular forest birding.

Black-crested Bulbul

Small Niltava male

Small Niltava female

Rufous-bellied Niltava male

Rufous-bellied Niltava female

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher

Starting off with a pair of Black-crested Bulbuls, we got the Small and Rufous-bellied Niltavas, and the Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, before the first 'unusual for us' bird turned up – Pale-chinned Flycatcher.

Pale-chinned Flycatcher

Indian White-eye flock

A flock of 10-12 Indian White-eyes created a ruckus at the watering hole.

A White-rumped Shama pair turned up, as did Little Pied Flycatcher female, White-tailed Robin pair, and a Snowy-browed Flycatcher pair.

White-rumped Shama male

White-rumped Shama female

Little Pied Flycatcher female

White-tailed Robin male

Snowy-browed Flycatcher male

The first really huge, ‘mega’ bird was, ironically, the Pygmy Blue Flycatcher, which is really difficult to get in the forest, but which came for a dip, and gave us plenty of time to photograph it. Barely 10 cm in size, it is just a little bit larger than the smallest bird in India, our familiar Pale-billed Flowerpecker.

Pygmy Blue Flycatcher male

The female visited the waterhole much later.

Pygmy Blue Flycatcher female

Another such species was the White-throated Bulbul, again not too easy to get in the forest – you WILL see it, but unlike most bulbuls it is a skulker, always staying within the bamboo, and it is very difficult to see well or photograph. Same is the case with the Abbott’s Babbler – seen every now and then, but tough to photograph.

Abbott’s Babbler (L) with Rufous-bellied Niltava (R)

Buff-barred Warbler

Yet another really rare bird that we got to see was the Siberian Blue Robin female. The last time I had seen it was almost 10 years back, at the Great Himalayan National Park, and I was very thrilled with this sighting, although it was quite late and the light was going fast.

Siberian Blue Robin female

The team at the bonfire

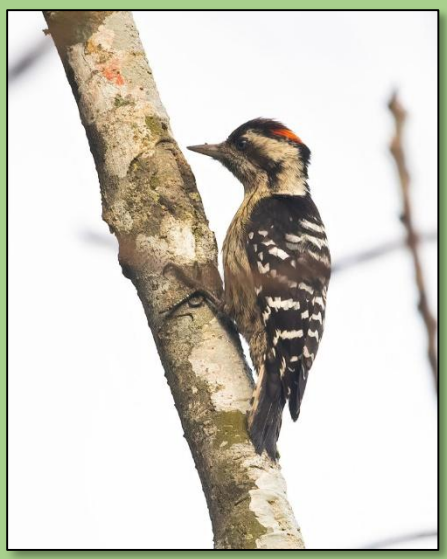
By now, just going on 5:00PM, it was getting really dark, so we moved back and, a relaxing bonfire later, wound up for the day.

Day-2: January 13, 2024: Buxa Tiger Reserve (TR)

We were up and ready by 6:30AM, but it was too foggy to step out – we could barely see the trees in front of our homestay.

Foggy morning at Buxa (Photo: Kaushik Lakshminarayan)

We decided to finish breakfast early, so that we wouldn't have to take a break again later and lose valuable birding time.



Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

Black-crested Bulbul

The day started with a couple of Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpeckers looking for breakfast. As the light got better, so did the sightings. A pair of Black-crested Bulbuls, right next to the road, gave great views. A Blue-throated Barbet let out a few exploratory calls, and a Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch foraged on the mossy tree-trunks.

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch

Maroon Oriole

A Maroon Oriole, male this time, gave excellent views and photo ops as it hopped around on some flowering bushes right at eye level. It was easily the best sighting I have ever had of this bird, and left us all feeling very satisfied.

We spent a half hour at the hide, and got some repeats from yesterday – White-rumped Shama, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, White-tailed Robin, Black-crested Bulbul, Little Pied Flycatcher, a male this time, White-throated Bulbul, and Snowy-browed Flycatcher.

White-throated Bulbul

Little Pied Flycatcher male

Snowy-browed Flycatcher male

One bonanza from this half hour was the sighting of a Pale Blue Flycatcher female – again, usually very tough to get.

Pale Blue Flycatcher female

The Streaked Spiderhunter paid a visit, enabling us to get some good views and photos.

Streaked Spiderhunter

The area around the forest gave good views of a couple of species – first the Blue-bearded Bee-eater, then the Yellow-browed Warbler.

Blue-bearded Bee-eater

Yellow-browed Warbler

We were to move back to Siliguri tonight, on our way to the next leg of the trip, Rishyap. Accordingly, we packed up and started off around 4:00PM. Buxa was not yet done with us, however – as a sort of parting gift, we got another Collared Falconet, a Long-tailed Shrike and, to top it off, a Black Stork in flight!

Day-3: January 14, 2024: Rishyap and en route

As we were shifting base to Rishyap, today was to be mainly a travel day, with birding on the way and, hopefully, for a couple of hours after we reached Rishyap. We started off by 6:30AM, hoping to get to Rishyap by lunch.

It was a very scenic route, with innumerable vistas of rolling hills, beautiful valleys, old forests, and greenery all around. Part of the route was alongside the River Teesta. Connecting the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts was the Coronation Bridge, a remnant of British times, and still very impressive, as it spanned the river and served as a vital channel of movement of people and goods. And the statues of Royal Bengal Tigers on either side of the bridge were quite striking!

Royal Bengal Tiger statue at the Coronation Bridge

The team in the eerie blue early morning light
(Photo courtesy: Kaushik Lakshminarayan)

As we moved towards Rishyap, we started seeing more tea gardens along the road. Soon, we stopped at a small roadside eatery for breakfast – what else but the ubiquitous Maggi, omelette and *puri masala*.

Some of the local snacks were interesting, from Subedar chips to Sachin mixture. Some members also tried the local special – yak milk cheese. I would have to say that the reviews were mixed!

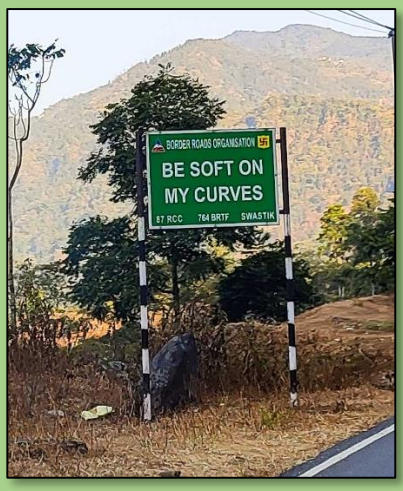
In case some of you are wondering, food is an integral part of our trips. Like they say, an army marches on its stomach… Well, we bird on our stomachs!

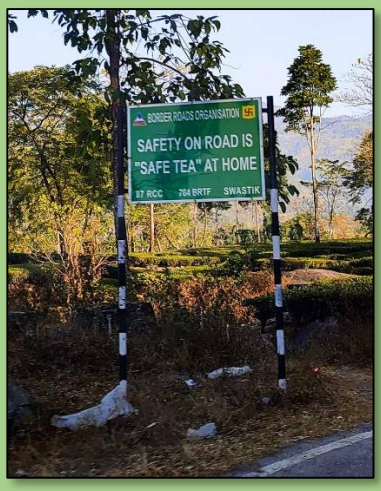
The landscape was quite captivating, with every turn showing a vista better than the last, and the tree lines on distant mountains never failed to impress.

There was not much birding along the way, the only exception being a stop we made near a bridge to look at the hundreds of nests being built on the underside by a large group of around 70 Nepal House Martins. We were enthralled at the precision with which they would come flying in at full speed and zoom straight into the nests. We marveled at how they kept track as to which nest belonged to whom – never flying into someone else's nest – and how they never bumped into the doorways!

Nepal House Martin

We were also quite entertained by the creative road safety signs put up by the Border Roads Organisation!





Some of the signs put up by the Border Roads Organisation

We arrived at the homestay around 11:30AM and checked into our rooms. Having dropped off our bags and had a quick cup of tea, we decided to take a stroll around the homestay and get in some birding before lunch. The first bird we saw was captivating, to say the least – a colourful male Green-tailed Sunbird hovering around some flowering bushes, filling up his nectar tank.

Green-tailed Sunbird male

The homestay had put up some feeding platforms and a water station which, we were soon to learn, were the centre of attraction for many birds. We saw a group of Russet Sparrows come for the *dal* rice, along with other birds like the Dark-rumped Rosefinch and Green-backed Tit.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch female with Russet Sparrows

Green-backed Tit

A Black-throated Thrush, head resolutely turned away from us, confused us for a while, until it flew and I managed to capture an identifiable photograph.

Black-throated Thrush

Grey-winged Blackbird male

A few Grey-winged Blackbirds rooted around for scraps in the underbrush. The female seemed to be picking up mud, which it would use while building a nest, but I was puzzled, since the nesting period is usually between May and August.

Grey-winged Blackbird female

Himalayan Queen Fritillary

We also saw a beautiful butterfly that goes by the name of Himalayan Queen Fritillary – a name that I felt was as beautiful as the butterfly itself. It was a lifer for me, and the first butterfly of the trip – though that's probably because we weren't paying enough attention to the butterflies!

Black-faced Warbler

After a badly-needed lunch, we resumed birding, keeping in mind that it would get dark quite early. We met a small flock of the adorable Black-faced Warblers, and spent a few minutes watching them as they went about their business.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch male

Dark-rumped Rosefinch female

We found a pair of Dark-rumped Rosefinches – finally in the sunlight! – and got some nice photographs.

Hoary-throated Barwing

The Grey-winged Blackbirds were still around – this time flitting back and forth across the tail of the valley nearest to us. A pair of Striated Laughingthrushes and Hoary-throated Barwings – both for the first time on the trip – and a Striated Bulbul in flight were followed by a large group of Red-billed Leiothrixes and a couple of Black-throated Bushtits.

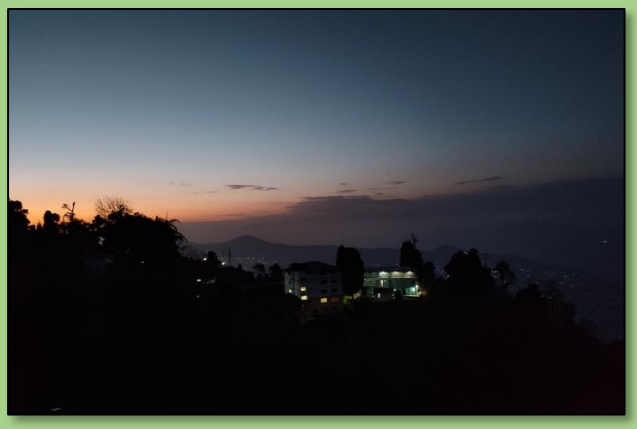
Red-billed Leiothrix

Yellow-billed Blue Magpie

Back at the homestay, a couple of Yellow-billed Blue Magpies visited the food court, and we also had a couple of Grey Treepies dropping in.

Grey Treepie

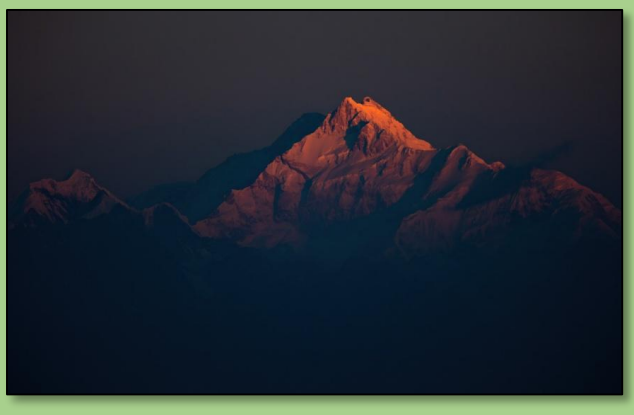
The homestay overlooked a valley and provided breathtaking views of Mt Kanchenjunga. We were fortunate to have a couple of clear days, and to be able to see Kanchenjunga in different lighting conditions.



Nightfall on the Kanchenjunga range

Day-4: January 15, 2024: Rishyap

Today was to be our only full day at Rishyap, and we were keen to make it count. Hence we decided to make an early start.



Sunrise on the Kanchenjunga

While we waited for the group to assemble, we had the opportunity to see the Kanchenjunga in the glorious morning light of sunrise – it was breathtaking.

Another view of the sunrise (Photo: Kaushik Lakshminarayan)

Birding for the day started with the usual suspects – Grey-winged Blackbird, Russet Sparrow, Green-backed Tit, Dark-rumped Rosefinch – sunning themselves. A Yellow-billed Blue Magpie landed up for an early breakfast. Then came a bird that was high on everyone's wishlist – the beautiful Common Green Magpie. It hung around for quite some time as it filled up on the leftover chicken waste from yesterday.

Common Green Magpie

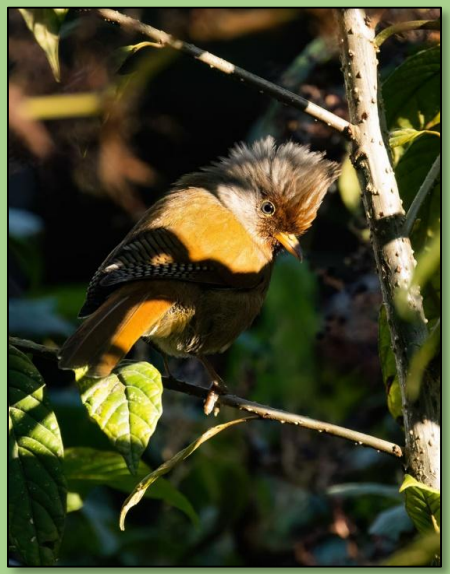
Rufous Sibia

As we walked down near the gate, we saw a Rufous Sibia picking some seeds from a plant, identified later as *Leucosceptrum canum*, which goes by the oh-so-evocative common names Hairy White-wand and Bird's Coca Cola Tree!

It was amazing how delicately the Sibia was able to pull off only the seeds while leaving the flower intact. The plant seemed to be popular – we also saw a couple of House Sparrows and a Whiskered Yuhina eating the seeds before the Sibia came and chased them off!

Rufous Sibia chasing away Whiskered Yuhina

A view of the forested hills at Rishyap (Photo: Kaushik Lakshminarayan)



Hoary-throated Barwing

A female Blue-fronted Redstart hung around on the bamboo poles. The nearby fruiting trees and bushes were bird magnets. A female Grey-winged Blackbird played hide-and-seek with us. A Hoary-throated Barwing also paid a visit, and a pair of gliding Eurasian Sparrowhawks caused a flutter.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk

Rufous-winged Fulvetta

After breakfast, the rest of the group took off on a hike; not feeling very well, I decided to stay back and bird near the homestay. As though to console me for missing out the trail birding, I spotted a Rufous-winged Fulvetta zipping around in the trees, a Lemon-rumped Warbler, a White-tailed Nuthatch, and a small group of Himalayan Griffons gliding around.

Himalayan Griffon

The Green-backed Tit foraged alongside the Whiskered Yuhinas and Green-tailed Sunbirds, and I spent some time watching them. The Sunbirds were fluttering around, sipping nectar from the flowers, but it was impossible to capture the action – they are so fast! – it was very frustrating, and all I had to show for it was a bunch of blurred photographs.

Ferns on the hillside

Orchid sp (*Cymbidium tracyanum*)

Poinsettia sp (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*, possibly)

The incredibly varied vegetation around Rishyap

I noticed that the vegetation around Rishyop was quite vibrant and unique – with cascading ferns, plants with multicolour leaves, and the most colourful flowers.

Mountain Hawk Eagle

A juvenile Mountain Hawk Eagle confused me for a long time, and became clear only after I confirmed the ID with the guide later in the day.

After lunch, I was back on the deck, waiting for some birds to turn up. I noticed that some of the Russet Sparrows had a yellowish throat band, which was very different from the yellowish wash on the underparts described in the books.

Russet Sparrow with yellow throat band

Green-backed Tit at the waterhole

The Green-backed Tit came and knocked the stuffing out of the water station, and I finally managed to get some nice shots of the hyperactive Green-tailed Sunbird!

Green-tailed Sunbird male

Late afternoon seemed to be the time the Russet Sparrows preferred to eat.

Russet Sparrow team lunch

A couple of Common Hill Mynas, from their perch on a tree in the middle of the valley, were calling quite hauntingly.

Common Hill Myna

A Grey-cheeked Warbler and a Broad-billed Warbler were great additions to the list.

Grey-cheeked Warbler

Broad-billed Warbler

The air was suddenly filled with the cacophony of a flock of about 20 White-throated Laughingthrushes, while a pair of Striated Laughingthrushes were their normal dignified selves.

Striated Laughingthrush

The rest of the gang got back to base around this time, tired but excited at the sightings they had got – Golden Babbler, Brown Wood Owl, Golden-throated Barbet, Scaly Laughingthrush, Red-tailed Minla, Large Niltava, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Fire-tailed Sunbird, Scarlet and Gold-naped Finches, and Red-headed Bullfinch. Some of them had been just brief glimpses as the birds flashed past, but they were great species nevertheless.

I spied some flitting movement in a bush that turned out to be a pair of Rufous-capped Babblers! They entertained me for a while as they went about feeding rather acrobatically.

Rufous-capped Babbler

They joined me as I was birding close to the gate. A couple of Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes turned up and enlivened the proceedings, accompanied by a few more of the Grey-winged Blackbirds – in total, we counted around 40 of them! We were informed by the guide that they have not yet moved down to the plains.

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush and Grey-winged Blackbird

In the distance, I saw a moving green patch inside a moss-covered tree, which turned out to be a Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, and a Blue-fronted Redstart gave a good *darshan*.

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon

Blue-fronted Redstart female

With this, we came to the end of a long and tiring day. Tomorrow we would be moving back to the plains – Gajoldoba.

<u>Day-5: January 16, 2024: Gajoldoba and en route</u>

Waking up at 5:00AM at a cold place like Rishyap was torture, but there was no choice, as we had decided to do an hour or two of birding at a place called Paporkheti before moving on to Gajoldoba.

The very first sighting, beside the road, brought us to a screeching halt – a Spotted Forktail! It was still quite dark, but we observed it for a few minutes as it slowly made its way up a trickle of water on the hillside.

Spotted Forktail

Olive-backed Pipit

Next was a flock of Olive-backed Pipits – about 12 of them! They were scattered all over the tops of a couple of pine trees. A Blue-fronted Redstart, 4-5 Dark-rumped Rosefinches and 3 Rufous Sibias kept them company.

First-winter Blue Rock Thrush

A little further along the drive, we spotted a bird on top of a pipe that seemed to have scales all over. It turned out to be a first-winter Blue Rock Thrush. A male adult was also seen, but didn't give us time to photograph it properly.

Long-tailed Minivet

At the same spot, our attention was caught by a flash of red that turned out to be a male Long-tailed Minivet. Soon we found another 4-5 of them, both males and females, on other trees nearby. Himalayan and Red-vented Bulbuls were also around.

Himalayan Bulbul

Red-vented Bulbul

Then came the sighting that was probably the top moment of the trip. We saw a couple of trees at the bend of the hillside road that seemed to be showing some movement.

Black-winged Cuckooshrike

On checking, first we saw a couple of grey birds in the foliage that were later identified as Black-winged Cuckooshrikes. Then, as we scanned the tree further, we saw a Long-tailed Broadbill.

Long-tailed Broadbill

And then one more… and one more… and two more… Finally we ended up with 35 of them!

Long-tailed Broadbill flock

Long-tailed Broadbill flock

It was unbelievable. I had never seen more than 2-3 at a time, so even 5 or 10 would have been impressive. But 35! I would be safe in saying that it was a once-in-a-lifetime sighting, one that stays in the mind till our memory lasts.

After some 15 minutes of watching the flock hop around, foraging and preening, we tore ourselves away from there, because we still had a long way to go. But just as we started moving to the cars, there was some movement in a bush right next to us, and out popped another bird that is usually notoriously difficult to see – the White-browed Piculet!

White-browed Piculet

It felt like the bird gods were blessing us that day!

Blue Whistling Thrush

A Buff-barred Warbler moved around in the tree directly overhead, and the finishing touches were given by a Blue Whistling Thrush and a Common Hill Myna, far away on a tree in the valley.

By now it was past 9:00AM, and we were hungry, and behind schedule! So we had a quick breakfast and started off to Gajoldoba, with no stops along the way.

Reaching there around 11:00AM, we found there was quite a bit of fog still hanging over the lake, but still made our way to the boat jetty for a boat birding session – after all, birding time is precious!

Some members of the team – Karin & Sridhar in the front boat, Kaushik & Amitabha in the rear boat (Photo: Lavanya Kothandaraman)

Eurasian Wigeon male

Eurasian Wigeon female

The first sighting was the Eurasian Wigeon sedately swimming around, followed by Red-wattled Lapwing and Indian Moorhen. At the edge of a patch of reeds, we saw some activity that turned out to be a beautiful Bluethroat. It was quite confiding and allowed us to approach fairly close.

Bluethroat

Lesser Adjutant

We moved ahead, and saw another Gajoldoba regular – the Lesser Adjutant. It was foraging inside one of the reed clumps, and it was quite difficult to get a clear view, but it soon flew out and perched on a reed in full view.

Tufted Duck

Northern Shoveler in eclipse plumage

A few Tufted Ducks floated placidly on the lake, as also a Northern Shoveler in eclipse plumage. Another regular, Common Teal, was seen in decent numbers, and there were a few Gadwalls in the distance. Birds that are common down South, like the Eurasian Coot and Indian Moorhen, were seen, but just ones and twos – a reminder not to take any bird for granted!

Striated Grassbird

We spotted a Striated Grassbird, so perfectly positioned among the rushes that it took some maneuvering of the boat to get a partially clear view.

Cattle Egret with frog

A Cattle Egret had caught a frog, and we watched for several minutes as it struggled to swallow it. It was very interesting to see how the Egret kept dipping the frog in the water, as though to lubricate it.

A Tricolor Shrike made its appearance, as did a Common Stonechat female; the male was seen, but at a distance. A couple of Great Cormorants and a drenched Little Cormorant on a stump added to the tally. We continued to have flypasts from various birds – Northern Shovelers, Red-naped Ibis, Great Crested Grebe.

Red-naped Ibis

Great Crested Grebe

The Great Crested Grebe, one of the specialities of Gajoldoba, finally showed up and circled around for a while before settling down on the lake – which is when we realized that there were 3 more individuals present!

Great Crested Grebe

Osprey

A beautiful Osprey flew by very close – unfortunately the thick haze prevented us from getting a good look at it. A foraging Bronze-winged Jacana gave us great views – so much easier from the water side! – and we also saw a Common Stonechat pair.

Common Stonechat female

Great Egret

A stately Great Egret strolled along the water's edge. With the light slowly improving, we were able to get somewhat better photos, at least for the birds that were close by, like the Common Teal.

Common Teal

Ruddy Shelduck

Moving ahead, we came across a group of about 20 Ruddy Shelducks scattered across one of the islands, and in the water nearby.

Temminck's Stint

Little Ringed Plover

A few waders were also seen – Lesser Sand, Kentish and Little Ringed Plovers, Common Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint. A small party of Sand Larks was seen – a lifer for most people in the group.

Sand Lark

Shortly after, we managed to finally locate one of the birds we had been eagerly looking for – a mega rarity, the Common Goldeneye. It was quite a distance away, and the haze did not make it any easier. Also, it is by nature an extremely skittish bird, tending to take off even when the boat is as much as a hundred meters away. However, we had to try, and try we did – slowly edging closer, moving sort of obliquely to avoid going head on to the bird.

Common Goldeneye

We managed to get a bit closer, enough to get some recognizable photos. Then, true to its nature, it took off and vanished into the haze.

By now it was already 3:30PM. We had not taken a break for lunch, wanting to utilize the available light as best as we could; we were tired and hungry, and the light was quite poor too. So we decided to wind up for the day. At the nearby marketplace, we had the ultimate comfort food – hot Maggi, washed down by some tea – and headed off to the hotel in Siliguri, which would be our base for the next 3 days.

On the way, we saw some 15-20 Black Kites circling above. We scanned the group, hoping to encounter some vultures, but to no avail.

Day-6: January 17, 2024: Rongtong & Shivakhola

After a long day yesterday, we were a little slow getting started today. As we left Siliguri, we found nearly 200 Black Kites circling above the wholesale vegetable market. We were informed that there was no dumpyard in the vicinity, and wondered why the Kites were there in such numbers.

It was a hazy, gloomy day, which did not help. However, the first sighting, a Golden-fronted Leafbird, pepped us up. We saw a couple of massive birds sitting on trees and got excited, thinking they were raptors of some kind, till we realized they were roosting Indian Peafowl!

Indian Peafowl roosting

Since the light was so bad, we decided to finish breakfast first, hoping that the light would improve by the time we finished. The trees outside our regular breakfast restaurant usually had some activity, and today was no different. The first was a White-tailed Nuthatch, also looking for breakfast. A Hair-crested Drongo let out a few meditative calls, sounding like it was testing its voice. A Great Barbet and a Blue-throated Barbet also foraged in the same tree.

Great Barbet

The Darjeeling toy train runs on a track that passes right behind the restaurant, barely a metre from the rear door, and the other side of the track is the slope of the hill. There are a few bushes there that seemed to be the regular haunt of a Streaked Spiderhunter – one turned up as we waited for breakfast, too, and we were to see this bird at this point several times over the next few days.

Streaked Spiderhunter

It was also very funny to watch how the locals would be playing cards on the train track – and hurriedly shift things out of the way when the train came, only to park themselves back there once the train had passed!

Local residents at their card game

Having finished breakfast, we found that it was still very foggy and the light was still as bad. We decided to drive to a hillock some distance away in the hope that maybe things would be better there.

Long-tailed Minivet male

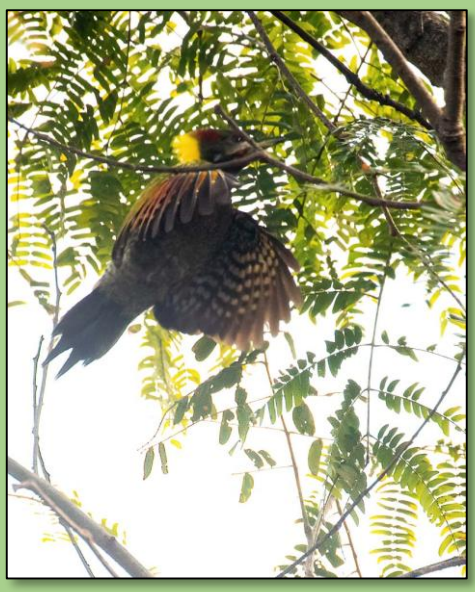
Long-tailed Minivet female

There we saw a few Long-tailed Minivets, among which one was slightly different – the Short-billed Minivet!

Short-billed Minivet male

Bronzed Drongo

We also saw the Bronzed Drongo, Chestnut-tailed Starling and Lesser Yellownape in quick succession.



Lesser Yellownape

A couple of fruiting trees, loaded with berries, were also loaded with birds. There were several Common Hill Mynas scattered all over the tree, along with a few Wedge-tailed and Pin-tailed Green Pigeons, Blue-throated Barbets and Red-vented Bulbuls.

Pin-tailed Green Pigeon

But it was difficult – the fog kept rolling in in waves, and made it very difficult to locate the birds – every leaf looked like a Green Pigeon!

The team watching the fruiting tree, far below in the valley

But since it would likely be the same everywhere else too, we decided to try and wait it out. A few Black-crested Bulbuls were around, and a pair of Black-hooded Orioles too – they had been calling for quite some time, but we had not been able to find them in the thick fog – we were able to see them only when one came and perched on a tree near us.

Black-hooded Oriole

After an hour or so, the light slowly started improving, and we started seeing some more activity – a Hair-crested Drongo, a small flock of Long-tailed Minivets, a couple of Red-whiskered Bulbuls and even an Indian Peafowl.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

Some of us decided to walk around a bit, and found a few more birds – Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Crimson Sunbird, and a Yellow-bellied Warbler.

Yellow-bellied Warbler

The villagers had stuck motorcycle helmets onto a couple of posts – I dubbed them the Shortcut Scarecrows!

The Shortcut Scarecrows

Asian Barred Owlet

The sun peeped out and, a little down the road, we came across a beautiful Asian Barred Owlet that gave us plenty of time as it sunned itself, as did a Grey Bushchat.

Grey Bushchat male

Tea estate workers on the move

A group of tea estate workers, walking back after winding up their shift, made for a colourful picture against the backdrop of the hillock.

We moved to another patch, and struck dividend immediately – a Collared Falconet! Although we had seen the Falconet at Buxa earlier, this time it was much closer and, since the sun had just come out, seemed to be basking and in a relaxed mood. Hence we were able to view and photograph it for quite some time. After a few minutes, it started moving around, as though scanning the ground for prey, and we got to see it from many different angles.

Collared Falconet

Having watched the Falconet to our hearts' content, we moved ahead and came to a stream. There we found some of the usual suspects: Plumbeous Water Redstart and White-capped Water Redstart.

Plumbeous Water Redstart male

White-capped Water Redstart

A beautiful Little Forktail foraging in the icy stream held our attention for a while.

Little Forktail

Kaushik decided to walk down to the river, to try and get closer eye-level shots of the Redstarts.

Kaushik with the Redstarts

Moving on, we came across another Asian Barred Owlet – and owls, as you know, cannot be ignored! We spent a few minutes watching this bird as it sat on a tree, turning its head this way and that.

Yellow-vented Flowerpecker

The next sighting was a very good one – the Yellow-vented Flowerpecker. It CAN be seen, once in a while, but it is usually hyperactive and always moving, and it is really difficult to get good photographs. Fortunately for us, this individual was sitting around quite peacefully on an exposed branch for a while, before moving to a tree with some foliage.

Plain Flowerpecker

To add to our joy, we also got a Plain Flowerpecker at the same location!

Blue Rock Thrush

And a Blue Rock Thrush nicely rounded off the morning's proceedings.

By now it was almost 2:00PM, and we were famished. We broke for lunch, pretty satisfied at the takings of the last two hours, which had more than made up for the gloomy start to the day.

After lunch, we estimated we would have possibly an hour and a half or so before it started getting dark. We moved to a nearby spot to try and find some birds we had missed so far. As usual, the Blue-throated Barbet and Hair-crested Drongo were around.

Blue-throated Barbet

The Crimson Sunbird was known to frequent this spot, and we were hopeful of getting some good views. We did see it, but inside a tangle of bushes from where it refused to come out. After a while, we realized that it was actually exiting from the far side, and going back and forth to a specific flowering plant. We hung around there and finally managed to get some decent photographs.

Crimson Sunbird

A noisy bunch of Common Hill Mynas on a dry tree engaged us for a while before we decided to wind up for the day.

<u>Day-7: January 18, 2024: Rongtong</u>

Today being the last full day of the trip, we were eager to make the most of it. Having made an early start, we had planned to finish off breakfast and get to the field early. We unfortunately had not reckoned with Murphy's Law. When we reached the restaurant, we found that it would be at least an hour before breakfast could be had.

Well, we birders are a resilient lot. What do we do when there's an unexpected gap in the schedule? Well, we bird, of course!

The team in action, with a couple of vigilant canine companions

We decided to spend the hour at a nearby spot to try and tick off some species that we hadn't got so far. The first sighting was one that many of us had been waiting for – Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush. There were 3 of them, foraging around on the leafy branches, and we got a pretty good look at them.

Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush

White-tailed Nuthatch

We also saw a White-tailed Nuthatch. One of the most striking species of the North East, the Common Green Magpie, turned up with a catch which we could not identify, and proceeded to consume it with great relish. The Great Barbet displaced the Blue-throated Barbet from the flowering tree.

Great Barbet

A Greater Flameback hopped around, looking for prey, and a Himalayan Buzzard relaxed atop a tree.

Greater Flameback

Himalayan Buzzard

By now it was time for breakfast, and we started driving back. En route, we came across a couple of lovely Long-tailed Broadbills right next to the road, and an immature Maroon Oriole.

Long-tailed Broadbill

Maroon Oriole immature

One of the staff members at the restaurant was very interested in seeing the birds that Kaushik had been photographing!

Kaushik's keenly interested audience

The first sighting after the break was a Slaty Blue Flycatcher female – another good species. I did wish that we had got the male also, though!

Slaty Blue Flycatcher female

Yellow-browed Warbler

A pair of Whiskered Yuhinas and a Yellow-browed Warbler rounded off the morning tally. We prepared to leave but, just then, we noticed some movement in the shrubs alongside the road – it turned out to be a lovely Hoary-bellied Squirrel.

Hoary-bellied Squirrel

After this we finally got going – we were moving to an area called Norbong.

Rufescent Prinia breeding male

Whiskered Yuhina

At Norbong, we saw a Rufescent Prinia – usually quite difficult to get – a Whiskered Yuhina and a pair of Red-vented Bulbuls (of the *benghalensis* sub-species, with the rufous ear patches).

Red-vented Bulbul

A pair of Large Woodshrikes were active. One of them was very vocal, calling every now and then.

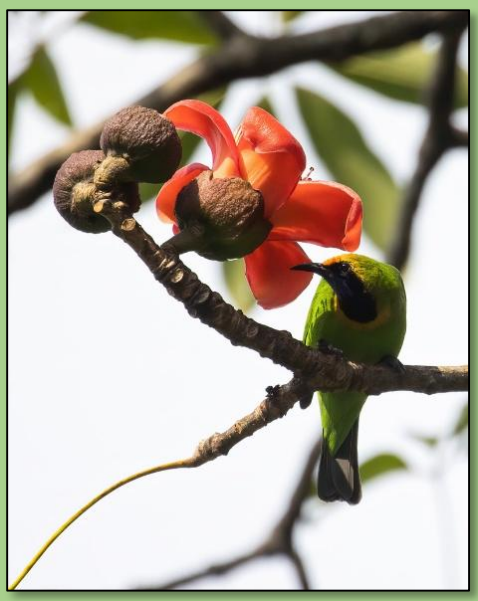
Large Woodshrike

Ashy Bulbul

A single Ashy Bulbul turned up and gave a pleasant surprise, followed by a Black-crested Bulbul pair. Also flying around were a flock of around 30 Nepal House Martins. An Indian Tortoiseshell gave us only the second butterfly of the trip.

Indian Tortoiseshell

We broke for lunch and then hung around watching the birds in the nearby trees for some time. A few Golden-fronted Leafbirds were foraging busily, as always in the company of a couple of Hair-crested Drongos.



Golden-fronted Leafbird

Hair-crested Drongo

Crested Goshawk

Moving on, a Crested Goshawk flypast created major excitement, and was quickly followed by a Himalayan Buzzard.

We saw a couple of Taiga Flycatchers, and a Large Cuckooshrike that seemed to be quite restless, incessantly turning its head this way and that for several minutes.

Large Cuckooshrike

Black Baza

On a bare tree a little distance into the valley, we saw a preening Black Baza – the guide was also surprised at how early it had arrived. Some members went down the valley to try and get closer to the Baza; I decided to walk around on the road, and came across another Taiga Flycatcher that still retained a hint of red on the throat.

Taiga Flycatcher

Once the others got back, we decided to move to a nearby hide where the Laughingthrushes were supposed to be coming regularly. As seemed to be usual in this area, they had placed some chicken waste for the birds to feed on. After a quick cup of tea, we settled down to wait. For quite some time there was no activity at all, and we began to wonder if we were wasting our time.

After some time, we saw some movement in the nearby bushes, and an immature Brown Shrike popped out.

First-winter Brown Shrike

All this time, no other birds had come, and the light was also fading, so we were beginning to lose hope of seeing the Laughingthrushes, although we could hear them calling down in the valley.

As if to keep us engaged, a Himalayan Bulbul turned up, as did a Small Niltava female. A Snowy-browed Flycatcher showed up – we rued the fact that it didn't come when the light was better!

Anyway, that was it for the day, and we packed up and headed back to the hotel.

Day-8: January 19, 2024: Siliguri

Since we had only half a day available today before our return flights, we made an early start and headed straight to the Fulbari Wetlands, known to be a productive birding spot with potential for some nice sightings.

Reaching by 07:30AM, we found that the area was completely under fog, and it was impossible to bird for the time being. The only birds we could see were near where we had parked – a Brown Shrike, all fluffed up, and a wet-looking Asian Pied Starling on the wire.

Realizing that there was no point hanging around waiting for the fog to clear, we decided to finish breakfast in the meantime. We drove to the nearby market, where a few sleepy shops were just opening, and managed to find an eatery that was almost ready.

We finished breakfast – which was more like lunch, with paneer parathas et al! – and got back to the spot by about 09:30AM. Walking into the fields near the village, we first came across a couple of haystacks that were buzzing with activity – nearly a hundred Baya Weavers were feeding, preening, doing warm-up flights, and so on.

Baya Weaver

We spent a few minutes watching them, then moved ahead. Asian Pied Starlings were foraging on the ground, and gave us some up-close views.

Asian Pied Starling

We reached the water – there was a thick haze hanging over it – but saw that there were a lot of ducks and other water birds around, though we couldn't really see them well. We noted the presence of Ruddy Shelduck, Red-crested Pochard, Gadwall etc, and figured that we might see them better a little later.

Red-crested Pochard

Common Iora

Near the path, we saw a pair of Common Ioras hopping around on the bamboo, and a Black Kite sitting on a bare tree – and I realized, once more, what a beautiful bird it actually is, even though we tend to dismiss it just because it is so numerous.

Black Kite

Next up was the Striated Grassbird! It was perched on some tall flimsy bamboo twigs, preening, and it was a wonder how they could take its weight.

Striated Grassbird

House Crow

A few House Crows were around, and one of them was holding something that had us confused as to whether it was nesting material or some aquatic creature!

A Steppe Eagle sitting on the ground in the middle of a harvested field gave an idea of its massive size, and a Common Chiffchaff hopped around.

Common Chiffchaff

Tricolor Shrike

A beautiful Tricolor Shrike, previously considered a sub-species of the Long-tailed Shrike, gave good views, as did a Siberian Stonechat.

Siberian Stonechat

House Crows mobbing Black Kite

A few Red-naped Ibises on the field, a bunch of House Crows mobbing a Black Kite and a beautiful Common Tailorbird on a bush stopped us for a while.

Common Tailorbird

An immature Ashy Drongo with a patchy belly sat on a stump while 2 adults, engaged in acrobatic flight, seemed to be having a go at the Ibises.

Ashy Drongo immature

A very pale Shikra confused us for a moment, and a Brown Shrike was also seen.

Red-naped Ibis

Shikra

About 60 Northern Lapwings circling round and round, right above us – it was such a beautiful sight.

Northern Lapwing

The next sighting was not just the sighting of the day, but the undoubted star of the entire trip – the Yellow-breasted Bunting!

Yellow-breasted Bunting

Sadly, we were informed that there are only 242 individuals left in the world. I am not sure how accurate that 242 number is – Grimmett et al, in 2016, estimated the population at somewhere between 250-2000 birds – but there is no denying that even 2000 is not a healthy number for any species.

It was a bittersweet moment. We were, of course, happy to have seen one of the rarest birds in the world. But it is also a sad commentary that another beautiful species is heading slowly but steadily towards extinction, and most of us do not even know about it.

Knowing that no other bird could trump this, we started slowly walking back. In our anticipation of seeing this bird, we had happily walked the 4-odd kilometres, with all our gear, without even feeling it. But the thought of walking back – well, that was not particularly enticing!

Anyway, walk we had to. The prospect of seeing the water birds in better light now cheered us up a little.

Steppe Eagle

The Steppe Eagle took flight – it was such a majestic sight! We also saw a Peregrine Falcon in the distance.

Common Pochard

Gadwall

Northern Pintail

Ferruginous Duck

The Red-crested Pochards and Ruddy Shelducks were still there, about 30 of them, but there were many other birds – Common Pochard, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Eurasian Wigeon, Great Crested Grebe – and 3 Ferruginous Ducks!

Also seen were a few White and Citrine Wagtails, Little and Great Cormorants, and Tufted Ducks.

All in all, a nice tally for the day, with some superb highlights.

The end of a trip is always sad… You always wish there was more time. But then you console yourselves that unless you leave, how will you travel again?! So with that, we bade goodbye to the wetland and left, resolving to come back again soon.

The full list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Siliguri 12 Jan 2024	Buxa TR 12 & 13 Jan 2024	Rishyap Road 14 Jan 2024	Rishyap 15 Jan 2024	Paporkheti 16 Jan 2024	Gajoldoba 16 Jan 2024	Rongtong 17 Jan 2024	Paglajhora 18 Jan 2024	Fulbari 19 Jan 2024
1	Abbott's Babbler	*Malacocincla abbotti*		Y							
2	Alexandrine Parakeet	*Psittacula eupatria*		Y	Y						
3	Ashy Bulbul	*Hemixos flavala*								Y	
4	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*		Y							Y
5	Asian Barred Owlet	*Glaucidium cuculoides*							Y		
6	Asian Fairy Bluebird	*Irena puella*		Y							
7	Asian Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*									Y
8	Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*						Y			Y
9	Asian Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*		Y			Y	Y			Y
10	Bank Myna	*Acridotheres ginginianus*									Y
11	Bank Swallow	*Riparia riparia*		Y							Y
12	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*		Y						Y	Y
13	Barred Cuckoo Dove	*Macropygia unchall*			Y						
14	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*									Y
15	Black Baza	*Aviceda leuphotes*								Y	
16	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*		Y				Y			Y
17	Black Eagle	*Ictinaetus malaiensis*				Y					
18	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y
19	Black Stork	*Ciconia nigra*		Y							
20	Black-crested Bulbul	*Rubigula flaviventris*		Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	
21	Black-faced Warbler	*Abroscopus schisticeps*			Y	Y					
22	Black-hooded Oriole	*Oriolus xanthornus*	Y	Y					Y	Y	
23	Black-naped Monarch	*Hypothymis azurea*		Y							
24	Black-rumped Flameback	*Dinopium benghalense*		Y				Y	Y		
25	Black-throated Thrush	*Turdus atrogularis*			Y						
26	Black-throated Tit	*Aegithalos concinnus*			Y	Y					
27	Black-winged Cuckooshrike	*Lalage melaschistos*					Y				
28	Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*		Y							Y
29	Blue Rock Thrush	*Monticola solitarius*					Y		Y		
30	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*			Y		Y		Y	Y	

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31	Blue-bearded Bee-eater	*Nyctyornis athertoni*		Y							
32	Blue-capped Rock Thrush	*Monticola cinclorhyncha*							Y	Y	
33	Blue-fronted Redstart	*Phoenicurus frontalis*			Y	Y	Y			Y	
34	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	*Merops philippinus*									Y
35	Bluethroat	*Luscinia svecica*						Y			
36	Blue-throated Barbet	*Psilopogon asiaticus*	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	
37	Booted Eagle	*Hieraaetus pennatus*			Y						
38	Broad-billed Warbler	*Tickellia hodgsoni*				Y					
39	Bronzed Drongo	*Dicrurus aeneus*							Y		
40	Bronze-winged Jacana	*Metopidius indicus*						Y			Y
41	Brown Shrike	*Lanius cristatus*								Y	Y
42	Brown Wood Owl	*Strix leptogrammica*				Y					
43	Buff-barred Warbler	*Phylloscopus pulcher*		Y							
44	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	*Sitta cinnamoventris*		Y						Y	
45	Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*				Y	Y				
46	Chestnut-tailed Starling	*Sturnia malabarica*		Y							
47	Citrine Wagtail	*Motacilla citreola*									Y
48	Collared Falconet	*Microhierax caerulescens*		Y					Y		
49	Common Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*									Y
50	Common Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*						Y			
51	Common Green Magpie	*Cissa chinensis*				Y			Y	Y	
52	Common Hawk Cuckoo	*Hierococcyx varius*			Y						
53	Common Hill Myna	*Gracula religiosa*		Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	
54	Common Iora	*Aegithina tiphia*								Y	Y
55	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*		Y							
56	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y
57	Common Pochard	*Aythya ferina*									Y
58	Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*						Y			Y
59	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*		Y						Y	Y
60	Crested Goshawk	*Lophospiza trivirgata*								Y	
61	Crested Kingfisher	*Megaceryle lugubris*							Y		
62	Crested Serpent Eagle	*Spilornis cheela*		Y							
63	Crimson Sunbird	*Aethopyga siparaja*							Y		
64	Dark-rumped Rosefinch	*Carpodacus edwardsii*			Y	Y	Y				
65	Eastern Cattle Egret	*Ardea coromanda*	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y
66	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	Y	Y							Y
67	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*						Y			
68	Eurasian Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*						Y			Y
69	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*				Y					
70	Eurasian Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*						Y			Y
71	Ferruginous Duck	*Aythya nyroca*									Y
72	Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum ignipectus*				Y					
73	Fire-tailed Sunbird	*Aethopyga ignicauda*				Y					
74	Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos macei*					Y				
75	Gadwall	*Mareca strepera*						Y			Y
76	Golden Babbler	*Cyanoderma chrysaeum*				Y					
77	Golden-fronted Leafbird	*Chloropsis aurifrons*		Y					Y	Y	
78	Golden-throated Barbet	*Psilopogon franklinii*				Y					
79	Gold-naped Finch	*Pyrrhoplectes epauletta*				Y					
80	Great Barbet	*Psilopogon virens*			Y	Y			Y	Y	

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81	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*						Y			
82	Great Crested Grebe	*Podiceps cristatus*						Y			Y
83	Great Egret	*Ardea alba*						Y			Y
84	Great Hornbill	*Buceros bicornis*		Y							
85	Great Myna	*Acridotheres grandis*		Y							
86	Greater Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*									Y
87	Greater Flameback	*Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus*								Y	
88	Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush	*Pterorhinus pectoralis*							Y	Y	
89	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus paradiseus*								Y	
90	Greater Yellownape	*Chrysophlegma flavinucha*				Y	Y				
91	Green Sandpiper	*Tringa ochropus*		Y							
92	Green-backed Tit	*Parus monticolus*			Y	Y					
93	Green-tailed Sunbird	*Aethopyga nipalensis*			Y	Y	Y				
94	Green-winged Teal	*Anas crecca*						Y			
95	Grey Bushchat	*Saxicola ferreus*					Y		Y	Y	
96	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*						Y			
97	Grey Treepie	*Dendrocitta formosae*			Y	Y	Y			Y	
98	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*					Y	Y			Y
99	Grey-bellied Tesia	*Tesia cyaniventer*		Y							
100	Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	*Yungipicus canicapillus*		Y					Y		
101	Grey-cheeked Warbler	*Phylloscopus poliogenys*				Y					
102	Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher	*Culicicapa ceylonensis*		Y						Y	
103	Grey-headed Lapwing	*Vanellus cinereus*									Y
104	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio poliocephalus*						Y			
105	Grey-hooded Warbler	*Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*		Y	Y						
106	Grey-sided Laughingthrush	*Pterorhinus caerulatus*				Y					
107	Grey-throated Babbler	*Stachyris nigriceps*								Y	
108	Grey-winged Blackbird	*Turdus boulboul*			Y	Y	Y				
109	Hair-crested Drongo	*Dicrurus hottentottus*		Y					Y	Y	
110	Himalayan Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*								Y	
111	Himalayan Bluetail	*Tarsiger rufilatus*			Y	Y					
112	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*			Y		Y			Y	
113	Himalayan Buzzard	*Buteo refectus*	Y	Y						Y	
114	Himalayan Cutia	*Cutia nipalensis*			Y						
115	Himalayan Griffon	*Gyps himalayensis*				Y				Y	
116	Himalayan Swiftlet	*Aerodramus brevirostris*		Y							
117	Hoary-throated Barwing	*Actinodura nipalensis*			Y	Y					
118	Hodgson's Redstart	*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*		Y							
119	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*		Y				Y	Y	Y	Y
120	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*		Y	Y						Y
121	Indian Golden Oriole	*Oriolus kundoo*								Y	
122	Indian Peafowl	*Pavo cristatus*							Y	Y	
123	Indian Pied Starling	*Gracupica contra*	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y
124	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	Y	Y	Y						Y
125	Indian White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*		Y	Y						
126	Jungle Babbler	*Argya striata*					Y				Y
127	Kentish Plover	*Anarhynchus alexandrinus*						Y			
128	Large Niltava	*Niltava grandis*				Y					
129	Large Woodshrike	*Tephrodornis virgatus*								Y	
130	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos levaillantii*		Y		Y	Y				Y

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131	Laughing Dove	*Spilopelia senegalensis*	Y								
132	Lesser Adjutant	*Leptoptilos javanicus*						Y			
133	Lesser Shortwing	*Brachypteryx leucophris*		Y							
134	Lesser Yellownape	*Picus chlorolophus*							Y		
135	Lineated Barbet	*Psilopogon lineatus*		Y							
136	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*		Y				Y			Y
137	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*						Y			
138	Little Forktail	*Enicurus scouleri*							Y		
139	Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*						Y			
140	Little Pied Flycatcher	*Ficedula westermanni*		Y						Y	
141	Little Ringed Plover	*Thinornis dubius*		Y				Y			
142	Long-billed Plover	*Thinornis placidus*		Y							
143	Long-tailed Broadbill	*Psarisomus dalhousiae*					Y			Y	
144	Long-tailed Minivet	*Pericrocotus ethologus*		Y			Y			Y	
145	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach tricolor*		Y	Y			Y	Y		Y
146	Maroon Oriole	*Oriolus traillii*		Y					Y	Y	
147	Medium Egret	*Ardea intermedia*						Y			
148	Mountain Hawk Eagle	*Nisaetus nipalensis*				Y					
149	Nepal Fulvetta	*Alcippe nipalensis*				Y					
150	Nepal House Martin	*Delichon nipalense*					Y			Y	
151	Nepal House Martin	*Delichon nipalense*					Y				
152	Northern Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*									Y
153	Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*									Y
154	Northern Shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*						Y			Y
155	Olive-backed Pipit	*Anthus hodgsoni*					Y			Y	
156	Olive-backed Pipit	*Anthus hodgsoni*					Y				
157	Orange-bellied Leafbird	*Chloropsis hardwickii*			Y						
158	Oriental Cuckooshrike	*Coracina javensis*		Y						Y	
159	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*		Y							
160	Oriental Pied Hornbill	*Anthracoceros albirostris*							Y		
161	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*				Y	Y				Y
162	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*						Y			
163	Pale Blue Flycatcher	*Cyornis unicolor*		Y							
164	Pale-chinned Flycatcher	*Cyornis poliogenys*		Y							
165	Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*									Y
166	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*						Y			
167	Pin-tailed Green Pigeon	*Treron apicauda*							Y		
168	Plain Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum minullum*							Y		
169	Plain Prinia	*Prinia inornata*						Y			Y
170	Plumbeous Redstart	*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*		Y	Y				Y		
171	Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*						Y			Y
172	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*							Y		Y
173	Pygmy Flycatcher	*Ficedula hodgsoni*		Y							
174	Red Junglefowl	*Gallus gallus*							Y		
175	Red-billed Leiothrix	*Leiothrix lutea*				Y					
176	Red-breasted Parakeet	*Psittacula alexandri*		Y							
177	Red-crested Pochard	*Netta rufina*									Y
178	Red-headed Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula erythrocephala*				Y					
179	Red-naped Ibis	*Pseudibis papillosa*	Y								Y
180	Red-tailed Minla	*Minla ignotincta*			Y	Y					

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181	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
182	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*						Y			Y
183	Red-whiskered Bulbul	*Pycnonotus jocosus*		Y					Y	Y	Y
184	River Lapwing	*Vanellus duvaucelii*		Y							
185	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	Y	Y	Y				Y		Y
186	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	Y					Y	Y		
187	Rosy Pipit	*Anthus roseatus*						Y			
188	Ruddy Shelduck	*Tadorna ferruginea*						Y			Y
189	Rufescent Prinia	*Prinia rufescens*								Y	
190	Rufous Sibia	*Heterophasia capistrata*				Y	Y			Y	
191	Rufous Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*						Y	Y		Y
192	Rufous-bellied Niltava	*Niltava sundara*		Y					Y		
193	Rufous-capped Babbler	*Cyanoderma ruficeps*			Y	Y					
194	Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher	*Ficedula strophiata*			Y				Y	Y	
195	Rufous-vented Yuhina	*Yuhina occipitalis*				Y					
196	Rufous-winged Fulvetta	*Schoeniparus castaneceps*				Y					
197	Russet Sparrow	*Passer cinnamomeus*			Y	Y	Y				
198	Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler	*Erythrogenys erythrogenys*					Y				
199	Rusty-tailed Flycatcher	*Ficedula ruficauda*							Y		
200	Sand Lark	*Alaudala raytal*						Y			
201	Sapphire Flycatcher	*Ficedula sapphira*			Y						
202	Scaly Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron subunicolor*				Y					
203	Scarlet Finch	*Carpodacus sipahi*				Y					
204	Shikra	*Tachyspiza badia*									Y
205	Siberian Blue Robin	*Larvivora cyane*		Y							
206	Siberian Stonechat	*Saxicola maurus [maurus Group]*						Y			Y
207	Slaty-blue Flycatcher	*Ficedula tricolor*								Y	
208	Small Niltava	*Niltava macgrigoriae*		Y						Y	
209	Snowy-browed Flycatcher	*Ficedula hyperythra*		Y					Y	Y	
210	Speckled Piculet	*Picumnus innominatus*							Y		
211	Spotted Dove	*Spilopelia chinensis*	Y		Y				Y	Y	Y
212	Spotted Forktail	*Enicurus maculatus*					Y				
213	Steppe Eagle	*Aquila nipalensis*									Y
214	Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler	*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*				Y					
215	Streaked Spiderhunter	*Arachnothera magna*		Y					Y	Y	
216	Striated Bulbul	*Alcurus striatus*			Y	Y					
217	Striated Grassbird	*Megalurus palustris*						Y			Y
218	Striated Laughingthrush	*Grammatoptila striata*			Y	Y	Y				
219	Taiga Flycatcher	*Ficedula albicilla*		Y					Y	Y	
220	Temminck's Stint	*Calidris temminckii*						Y			
221	Thick-billed Warbler	*Arundinax aedon*									Y
222	Tibetan Sand Plover	*Anarhynchus atrifrons*						Y			
223	Tickell's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus affinis*		Y							
224	Tickell's Thrush	*Turdus unicolor*				Y					
225	Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*						Y			
226	Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon	*Treron sphenurus*				Y					
227	Whiskered Yuhina	*Yuhina flavicollis*			Y	Y				Y	
228	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*									Y
229	White-bellied Erpornis	*Erpornis zantholeuca*							Y		
230	White-bellied Redstart	*Luscinia phaenicuroides*								Y	

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231	White-browed Piculet	*Sasia ochracea*					Y				
232	White-browed Wagtail	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*	Y	Y							
233	White-capped Redstart	*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*			Y		Y		Y		
234	White-gorgeted Flycatcher	*Anthipes monileger*								Y	
235	White-rumped Shama	*Copsychus malabaricus*		Y					Y	Y	
236	White-tailed Nuthatch	*Sitta himalayensis*				Y	Y		Y		
237	White-tailed Robin	*Myiomela leucura*		Y					Y		
238	White-throated Bulbul	*Alophoixus flaveolus*		Y							
239	White-throated Fantail	*Rhipidura albicollis*		Y		Y					
240	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*			Y			Y			Y
241	White-throated Laughingthrush	*Pterorhinus albogularis*				Y					
242	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*			Y	Y					
243	Yellow-breasted Bunting	*Emberiza aureola*									Y
244	Yellow-browed Warbler	*Phylloscopus inornatus*		Y							
245	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	*Treron phoenicopterus*							Y		
246	Yellow-vented Flowerpecker	*Pachyglossa chrysorrhea*							Y		
247	Green Pigeon sp.	*Treron sp.*		Y				Y			
248	Harrier sp.	*Circus sp.*						Y			
249	Old World Vulture sp.	*old world vulture sp.*						Y			
250	Thrush sp.	*Turdidae sp.*		Y							

***

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